

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT OPENING OF  
OZANAM VILLA HOSTEL, LISMORE  
8 JUNE, 1975

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YOUR LORDSHIP, <sup>THE</sup>HON. DOUG ANTHONY, MR. MAYOR,  
REVEREND CLERGY AND SISTERS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE  
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE BACK IN  
LISMORE AGAIN AND TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANOTHER  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL INITIATIVE. IN FEBRUARY LAST YEAR  
I WAS ASKED TO OPEN THE OZANAM HOME IN CANBERRA AND  
JUST TWO WEEKS AGO, MY WIFE AND I ATTENDED THE OPENING  
OF ST. BEDE'S IN HURSTVILLE.

IN CANBERRA, THE BLESSING WAS GIVEN BY  
BISHOP CAHILL - AN EASY NAME TO REMEMBER IN NEW SOUTH WALES.  
AT ST. BEDE'S THE BLESSING CAME FROM BISHOP CREMIN -  
ANOTHER GOOD, EASY IRISH NAME. AND BEING A CHARITABLE  
MAN, BISHOP CREMIN FELT HE SHOULD WARN ME ABOUT LISMORE.  
HE TOLD ME THAT BISHOP FARRELLY HAD BEEN SUCCEEDED BY  
HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP SATTERTHWAITE, WHO MUST HAVE ONE OF  
THE MOST DIFFICULT ECCLESIASTICAL NAMES IN THE COUNTRY  
IF NOT THE WORLD.

I MUST SAY I WAS SO INTRIGUED BY THE NAME THAT I LOOKED IT UP IN A BOOK CALLED SURNAMES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. THAT WAS AFTER I COULDN'T FIND IT IN THE BOOK OF SAINTS. ANYWAY, I LEARNED THAT IT'S OF SCANDINAVIAN ORIGIN AND MEANS "THE HILL PASTURE CLEARING", WHICH IS A QUITE PROPER NAME FOR SOMEONE WITH A FLOCK TO TEND.

BISHOP CREMIN WAS SAYING TO ME THAT WHEN HE WAS DOING POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN ROME, BISHOP SATTERTHWAITE LED A CHARMED LIFE. HE WAS NEVER CALLED ON TO SAY ANYTHING BECAUSE NOBODY COULD PRONOUNCE HIS NAME. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE MIGHT LIKE TO CHANGE PLACES WITH ME.

TWO WEEKS AGO AT ST. BEDE'S IN HURSTVILLE I WAS STRUCK BY THE GENEROSITY OF THE STATE PRESIDENT OF THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY, BILL FITZGERALD. NOT ONLY DID HE PRESENT ME WITH A BOOK ILLUSTRATING THE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY CATHOLIC CARE FOR THE AGED, BUT HE REMARKED ON THE SENSE OF PARTNERSHIP WHICH HAS GROWN UP BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS IN TOGETHER IDENTIFYING AND SERVING THOSE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO NEED OUR ATTENTION AND OUR CARE.

IT IS A VITAL PARTNERSHIP AND I APPRECIATE THAT COOPERATION. ITS TANGIBLE RESULTS, SUCH AS HOMES LIKE THIS ONE, WILL STAND AND SERVE THE NEEDS OF GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIANS WHO DESERVE TO BE LOOKED AFTER.

PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS ASKING WHERE THEIR TAXES GO, WHERE ALL THE MONEY IS BEING SPENT. IT IS EASY TO JUSTIFY EXPENDITURE ON OBVIOUS THINGS LIKE EDUCATION AND HEALTH FACILITIES. ON PURELY ECONOMIC GROUNDS THE INVESTMENT BRINGS EXCELLENT DIVIDENDS FOR OUR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

BUT THE REAL HUMANITY OF ANY SOCIETY IS SEEN THROUGH THE WAY IT BOTHERS TO TREAT ITS OLDER PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO HAVE RETIRED, HAVING GIVEN THEIR WORKING LIVES AND QUITE FREQUENTLY THEIR HEALTH, NOT TO MENTION THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, TO THE SERVICE OF THEIR COMMUNITY AND THEIR COUNTRY. EXPENDITURE ON THE NEEDS OF THESE PEOPLE CAN NEVER BE EXPECTED TO SHOW RETURNS IN MATERIAL TERMS.

IT'S PRECISELY THAT SORT OF EXPENDITURE WHERE THE COMMUNITY SHOWS HOW HUMANE IT REALLY IS, WHERE GOVERNMENTS SHOW HOW MUCH THEY CARE. THESE ARE THE AREAS WHERE TIME AND AGAIN THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY HELPS BRIDGE THE VERY REAL GAP BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS IN OUR SOCIETY. THESE ARE THE AREAS THAT CONCERN MY GOVERNMENT, THESE ARE THE VERY AREAS AT PRESENT UNDER CHALLENGE IN OUR COURTS.

SOME TWENTY YEARS AGO, SIR ROBERT MENZIES INTRODUCED DIRECT FEDERAL SUBSIDIES FOR AGED PERSONS HOMES. IT BEGAN AS A DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR SUBSIDY. WHEN A LABOR GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED IN DECEMBER 1972 THE LEVEL OF SUBSIDY WAS *\$2 for \$1*. WE HAVE INCREASED IT SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE THEN, MOST RECENTLY LATE LAST YEAR, WHEN WE RAISED IT TO A \$4 DIRECT FEDERAL SUBSIDY FOR EVERY ONE DOLLAR SPENT. THIS OZANAM VILLA HOSTEL, AMONG MANY OTHERS, BENEFITED FROM THAT DECISION. IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO ATTRACT A MAXIMUM SUBSIDY OF \$470,538 FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. IN ALL, THIS LISMORE HOME HAS HAD \$601,267 IN FEDERAL GRANTS, DIRECT GRANTS. IT IS ONE OF 16 ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HOMES IN NEW SOUTH WALES ACCOMMODATING 565 PEOPLE AND ATTRACTING DIRECT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GRANTS OF \$2,998,142.

BUT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE SUCH THINGS FOR GRANTED, BECAUSE RIGHT NOW THERE ARE HIGH COURT CHALLENGES WHICH CAST DOUBT ON THE RIGHT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PAY MONEY DIRECTLY TO CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS FOR AGED PERSONS HOMES AND HOSTELS. IT ALSO AFFECTS OTHER VITAL COMMUNITY-ORIENTED SERVICES WHICH ARE SUBSIDISED, RANGING FROM MEALS ON WHEELS TO THE BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE, SO MANY THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED AND WHICH SUCCESSIVE FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE EITHER INITIATED OR HELPED SUSTAIN.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SCHEMES INVOLVING QUITE COLOSSAL AMOUNTS OF MONEY, SCHEMES DESIGNED TO STREAMLINE THE PROVISION OF VITAL COMMUNITY SERVICES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, SCHEMES IN WHICH ALL THE CHURCHES HAVE A REAL INVOLVEMENT. THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY IN PARTICULAR IS CONCERNED WITH THE PROVISION OF SERVICES RANGING FROM CARE OF THE HANDICAPPED TO SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS, ALL OF WHICH DESERVE AND GET DIRECT FEDERAL SUBSIDIES.

THE CONTENTION ADVANCED BY THOSE CHALLENGING US IN THE COURTS IS THAT THIS MONEY OUGHT TO BE DOLED OUT TO THE INDIVIDUAL STATES WHICH CAN IN TURN DOLE IT OUT TO RECIPIENT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND PROJECTS. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT \$31 MILLION UNDER THE AGED PERSONS HOMES ACT, \$19 MILLION UNDER THE AGED PERSONS HOSTELS ACT.

ALL THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED BY CHANNELLING SUCH MONEY THROUGH STATE BUREAUCRACIES WOULD BE THE HOPELESS SLOWING UP OF FUNDING FOR AREAS OF CARE WHICH SHOULD NOT HAVE TO WAIT UPON THE RESOLUTION OF PETTY MANUFACTURED RIVALRIES. PEOPLE NEEDING CARE INVARIABLY NEED IT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. I DON'T NEED TO TELL THAT TO THIS AUDIENCE WHICH HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED HOW MUCH IT CARES.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE OF THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY HERE IN LISMORE REALISED THE PRESSING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THIS AREA, AND IN BUILDING THIS NEW HOSTEL, THEY CARRIED ON THE WORK BEGUN BY FATHER JOHN ROGER AND MR. ARTHUR MONAGHAN IN 1969. THIS NEW HOSTEL IS A CAREFULLY PLANNED AND EXECUTED PROJECT, INCORPORATING THE LATEST DESIGN IDEAS AND CATERING FOR 49 ELDERLY RESIDENTS AND 2 LIVE-IN STAFF.

THE SOLE CRITERION FOR ADMISSION - AS ALWAYS WITH HOMES RUN BY THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY - IS NEED. I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS ALREADY A WAITING LIST FOR ADMISSION TO THIS NEW HOSTEL AND THAT THERE ARE 50 PEOPLE WAITING FOR ADMISSION TO THE ORIGINAL WING.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THE MEMBERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE WILL SIT DOWN AND CONSIDER THE WAITING LISTS AND WONDER WHETHER THEY SHOULDN'T ADD TO THIS OZANAM VILLA COMPLEX TO MEET THE CONTINUING COMMUNITY NEED FOR THIS KIND OF ACCOMMODATION AND THE CARE THAT GOES WITH IT.

WHEN THAT HAPPENS, MY GOVERNMENT WILL BE HAPPY TO COOPERATE WITH THEM IN THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND ADVICE ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS KIND OF BUILDING. AND PROVIDING THE HIGH COURT CHALLENGE TO OUR FUNDING OF SUCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS DOES NOT SUCCEED, MY GOVERNMENT WILL BE DELIGHTED TO ASSIST ONCE MORE WITH THE PROVISION OF THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE SUBSIDY. THERE IS A VERY REAL SENSE IN WHICH WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

I HAVE VERY MUCH PLEASURE INDEED IN DECLARING OPEN THIS LATEST ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PROJECT, THE OZANAM VILLA HOSTEL, A FITTING REMINDER OF THE VISION OF YOUR FOUNDER, FREDERIC OZANAM.

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